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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2974

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000203

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR M, DS, AF, AF/EX, AF/SPG, DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/ICI/PII,
AND DS/OSAC
DEPT PASS TO USAID/AA AND USAID/SEC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: KHARTOUM EAC CONVENES AFTER MEDIA REPORTS ICC WILL ISSUE
ARREST WARRANT IN NEXT FEW DAYS

REF: KHARTOUM 146; 01/04/09

¶1. (SBU) The CDA convened Embassy Khartoum's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) on February 12 to review the Mission's security posture after the New York Times and several other major media outlets reported the International Criminal Court (ICC) will issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir in the upcoming days. In attendance were the A/DCM, USAID, POL, DLO, PAO, RAO, CLO, CON, OBO SSM, and RSO.

¶2. (SBU) The security situation in Sudan has not changed since the EAC last met on February 1, when Sudanese and international media reported an ICC decision was imminent (reftel). With the exception of a peaceful march and petition delivery by approximately 100 students at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher today, there has been no public reaction to the latest media reports. High-level police and security contacts are responsive to requests for assistance, and armed police posted at facilities and residences engaged EmbOffs today with a business-as-usual demeanor.

¶3. (SBU) The EAC will continue to monitor the situation closely and maintain active engagement with host government interlocutors, specifically MFA, police, and security contacts, to determine if the relationship is becoming icy. When an ICC announcement is made, the Post intends to encourage staff to be low-key, and to allow a liberal leave and work-from-home policy. The Embassy will remain open and staffed by Mission-essential security, communications, and Front Office personnel.

¶4. (SBU) The EAC also reviewed the Consular Affairs-proposed travel warning language. Because the six-month travel warning review has coincided with the publication of the New York Times article, to avoid misconstrued interpretation of the warning's release at this time, the EAC recommended to wait until Tuesday, after the holiday weekend, to finalize travel warning language. This will give the EAC more time to evaluate the situation on the ground. The current travel warning addresses both the threat environment and prudent security advice.

¶5. (SBU) The EAC is most concerned about the potential for one of many loosely-organized extremist cells in Khartoum to be emboldened by increased anti-American rhetoric that may result from an ICC decision. The RSO just concluded a two-day surveillance detection/attack recognition training program for all Mission chauffeurs and conducted a Surveillance Detection team practical exercise this week to address this concern.

¶6. (SBU) While the Mission operates on a heightened security level, many soft targets in Khartoum, to include dozens of NGOs, are not as disciplined or well-trained. In addition to coordinating closely with the Khartoum American School (KAS) today, the RSO informed the EAC he will also be hosting an Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) meeting on Monday, February 16. The RSO will use this outreach opportunity to review prudent security and emergency preparedness recommendations with the NGO community. Any change in the Mission's security posture or ICC-related developments will be reported via septel.

FERNANDEZ